

3/1/76

Dear Jim,

Glad you found time for the long and helpful analysis centering around Mao's Operation X-GL. I had not tried to keep up with it, thought it served both their interest, felt that the initiative was Chinese, and hadn't really gone past the embarrassment to Ford. I guess I also felt it was a takeoff on old British policy but had not thought about that, either.

Can it be that Mao sided with the third group in Angola to give more weight to those against the Russian-supported group, an anti-Russian rather than pro-US stance?

I haven't really thought of that since the first days of the public flareup some time ago when it seemed to me that the Russians and Cubans were giving Ford the loudest and clearest signals and saying that whatever the cost they would pay it. No more, in short.

Since starting to write again I've not paid much attention to the paper. As you also notice, the Post has deteriorated much, so there was even less reason to try to keep up with it. Worse, when I've been awake nights reception has been poor and the radio newscasts, those of the all-news stations, have not come in well. This morning I started rousing about 4, was wide awake by 5, stayed abed until 6:30 and the only news I heard was local. Those are the best hours for what the major papers ignore and what is edited out when policy people get the stations for the day trick.

My fear is that given his domestic needs Ford will react in the submoronic tradition, with toughness where he can't do anything now, at least through the election. This will enflame domestically and make a bad situation worse. It will also mean larger military wastes when they can't be tolerated now. It is bad enough to have an incompetent for President, worse to have a real lunkhead and terrible when he has competition that drives him farther in the wrong direction because for him there is no choice. As he, being lunkhead, sees choices.

Especially with no inspiring prospects from the Democrats. The situation is bad. The situation is so bad that without this boost Nixon can influence perhaps 25% of the GOP vote. Incredible as it is he still has that following. Between that and Reagan Ford, being Ford and unimaginative, is trapped. All of us with them, too.

Mao is not going to be the exploiter. I can see the Arabs getting in on it, too. What they can do is frightening because of what it can trigger. And if it does degenerate into a dog-eating the Chinese will survive it best. It will not hurt them and it can help them enormously.

I thought about your analysis, grateful for the time you took for it, while I went for a walk. In fact, when I saw it I laid it aside to read ~~in~~ just before walking, so I could think about it then. Not too long a walk but a vigorous one that tired me, which is good because it exercises the heart, legs and forced circulation. About 1300 yards uphill in 11 minutes, 12 back. Slower back to avoid jarring while doing downhill. If my polyester suit of mail had not slipped I'd have walked a little farther. When it slips it cuts off circulation a little. It is being replaced.

I'm in a brief lull that the CIA filled by sending me some stuff I asked for and letting me know that they have reacted to pressure while exploiting the present situation and letting 1460 pages out. Right now, before starting to read what they did send, I'm waiting for a call from the local community college, where there may be a part-time typist available. If she comes from there it is only about 15 minutes drive. Until Lesar goes over the very long affidavit draft he's received I can get back to writing.

It appears to be against regulations to include letters in third-class. One of Howard's was opened. But I'm putting clippings, etc., in a third-class envelope for you. Lil and I will watch the Post for you on those things in which we know you'll be interested.

If and when I publish another book myself it will be easier to read. I'm going to Lil an ~~XX~~ IBM of IBM-type typewriter. They have a deal with Sperry-Remington with S-R making an identical machine but not in all models. Before P-M was printed I'd asked the new printer if he will work out a new reduction for me.

With the same reduction this will mean increased legibility, as you can see in Lesar's part of Whitewash IV. With less reduction and the carbon ribbon this will be improved more. It will, of course, mean more pages per book, too. But our initial plans, with the continuing reduction, was for a 7x10 rather than 6x9 page. Costs made the difference when we decided to print. We'll stick with the 6x9 page.

For whatever you do with P-M, thanks.

It can't but do more good that the Razz. did.

Countless postal employees and I join in thanking you for the labels.

You perceived correctly, getting back to writing is a lift. Keeping working in itself is. When I went to Detroit Friday I work both ways on the plane on the affidavit draft. I started Part 3 in longhand on the bus to Washington Thursday.

Not only do I get lost in it - it imparts a good feeling because it means I'm getting something done, not just mailing out books and clipping papers. On which I, too, have had to curtail.

It feels more worthwhile.

Now to see how much good there is in the goodies.

Many thanks, and best,